

SEPTEMBER 2015 DISTRICT 1 NEWSLETTER

COMMISSIONER BRUCE G. ROBERTS



STATE ROAD A1A FROM OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD TO FLAMINGO AVENUE CONSTRUCTION:

The FDOT began construction of the \$13.4 million SR A1A Greenway project between Oakland Park Blvd. and Flamingo Ave on July 26, 2015. The project consists of the reconstruction of the roadway to include new wider sidewalks, landscaping for shade along the sidewalks, a new pedestrian crosswalk located in proximity of the CVS pharmacy, buffered bike lanes, and a business access drive to increase safety for the patrons who currently must back out onto SR A1A. The City partnered with the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (Broward MPO) and FDOT to create a project that meets the needs of business owners, residents and guests utilizing this corridor, and they will continue to showcase SR A1A as an attraction within the City. The hardscape portion of this project is expected to be completed in May 2017, with the landscaping portion immediately following to complete the overall project. The Maintenance of Traffic Plan includes maintaining one lane of traffic in each direction at all times. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations will be maintained throughout construction as well as bus stops. Business access signage will be installed to direct customers to businesses during construction. A public meeting was held on July 22, 2015 at the Beach Center as FDOT wanted to conduct outreach to the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.

It has also been brought to our attention by FDOT, that the State Road A1A project (north of Sunrise), which was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2015, is now anticipated to be completed prior to Thanksgiving!

FORT LAUDERDALE FIRE RESCUE RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS ISO "CLASS 1" STATUS: Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue has just been notified that they are now recognized as a "Class 1" Fire Rescue agency by the Insurance Services Organization. The department was previously ranked as a "Class 3" agency. However, under the direction and leadership of Fire Chief Robert Hoecherl, Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue was able to advance to the highest rating. This rating of "Class 1" represents "superior property fire protection." The ISO program recognizes the efforts of communities to provide fire protection services for citizens and property owners. A community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. Insurance companies use ISO information to help establish fair premiums for fire insurance — generally offering lower premiums in communities with better protection. In Fort Lauderdale, homeowners could see a savings up to 2%, and commercial businesses could see substantial savings from 3 – 12% .ISO collects information on municipal fire-protection efforts in communities throughout the United States. They then assign a Public Protection Classification from 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire-suppression program doesn't meet ISO's minimum criteria. ISO has extensive information on more than 47,000 fire-response jurisdictions. Currently, there are only 61 fire departments in the United States with an ISO rating of "Class 1."

Effective August 26th, 2015, our Fire Rescue Department also completed accreditation through the Commission of Fire Accreditation International. There are only 120 accredited agencies. Only 32 agencies out of 47,000 are both Accredited and ISO 1 rated. Congratulations to our Fire Rescue Department! These achievements are a true testament to their professionalism. Please click (or copy) the link below to see the presentation Command Staff made to the Commission on 9/1/15.

<http://fortlauderdale.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?M=F&ID=1695d2df-7f32-4aef-b79b-f1af6e49e731.pdf>

IMPROVED FINANCIAL RATINGS: Wall Street's leading credit rating institutions are signaling continued confidence in the financial health of our City! Standard & Poor's recently raised its rating on our General Obligation Bonds to AA+ citing "strong budgetary performance" and "very strong management, with strong financial policies and practices." Meanwhile, Moody's Investors Service affirmed its Aa1 rating on our General Obligation Bonds and raised its outlook noting that revenues have been "growing at a far more rapid pace than the City's expenditures during the past 6 fiscal years." We also received high marks for our large and improving local economy and tax base, balanced financial operations, and low debt burden. Our favorable bond ratings enable us to borrow money at reduced rates, which saves our neighbors and businesses millions of dollars in interest costs, while allowing us to continue to address community priorities and enhance quality of life.

UPDATE ON VACATION RENTALS: The City will require people renting out homes to vacationers to register and adhere to new regulations, however, at this time, has backed off imposing a 10-guest maximum on vacation rentals in single-family neighborhoods. Your commission agreed to set the guest limit at two people per bedroom plus two additional people. A one-bedroom house could be rented to four people, a two-bedroom to six and a 10-bedroom to 22. It was also decided that the number of vehicles used by guests would have to fit legally on site and not be parked on the street. As most of

you know, the neighborhoods, along with the City, have been frustrated since 2011 by a state law that restricted cities from prohibiting the rentals, from limiting how many times a property could be rented each year and from setting a minimum length for the rentals. This new City law will take effect November 1, 2015. At the commission meeting held on August 18, 2015, the commission reacted to numerous complaints from residents who say their peace and quiet is being disrupted by vacationers who overwhelm neighborhoods, party late, have little regard for neighbors and whose cars create parking nightmares. We also listened to the pleas of vacation rental property managers who agreed with the need for greater regulations, but feared the proposals could put them out of business. Commissioners unanimously approved the law after raising the cap, but asked staff to meet with property manager representatives to see what additional changes might be needed before the law takes effect. We do not want to penalize the group that is doing it right while we are going through this transitional period. I would like to see tougher consequences for those who violate the rules, a concern raised by many residents whose lives have been upended by nearby vacation rentals. The new City rules follow the occupancy standards of the Florida Building Code and have other health and safety requirements that are in place for transient establishments. The law follows a similar one passed in Flagler County that has already withstood an initial court challenge. The properties will have to meet City codes and owners will have to show proof they are paying the appropriate county and state taxes and fees. The rules require a local contact for emergencies and allow the City to temporarily suspend a rental license for a week after a third violation. Each additional violation would add another 30-day suspension, up to a one-year maximum. We will vote on the City registration charge ordinance at the Commission Meetings of September 1st and September 15th. The City Manager has proposed charging \$750 to register a property plus requiring a \$250 compliance inspection fee. The proposed annual registration renewal would be \$500 per property and a \$250 inspection. It is still recommended that neighbors call either the police for noise violation (954-764-4357) or code (954-828-8000). **ALSO**, please join Commissioner Trantalis and myself on Thursday, 9/17/15, 6pm, Commission Chambers -- for a Town Hall Meeting to discuss this new ordinance. The meeting is open to the public and will include opportunities for input on the regulation and requirements contained in the ordinance.

NEW BICYCLE SIGNAGE: Thanks to negotiations led by our Transportation and Mobility Department (TAM), new signage, pavement markings, and a parallel bike route (north and south of Sunrise Boulevard, between Searstown and Gateway), are part of FDOT's US 1 Improvement Project. The parallel bike route provides a safer, alternate route around the construction area for bicyclists. Among the key features of the bike route are the new pavement markings, referred to as "sharrows" or "shared-use arrows," which inform users that the street is shared by both bicyclists and motorists. As opposed to designated bike lanes, sharrows indicate that bicyclists may ride on the street using the full lane by following the middle of the arrow on the pavement markings. They also alert motorists to expect bicyclists on the street. TAM's Community Builders deserve tremendous credit for working with FDOT and our neighbors to ensure roadway safety is a critical component of future improvement projects. This initiative not only addresses our neighbors' priorities, it also fulfills the City's vision of being a more walkable, bikeable, fully connected, sustainable city with safe streets that are accessible to everyone.

SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER: We have many boards and committees that are in need of members. If interested in serving on one, please go to <http://fortlauderdale.gov/departments/city-clerk-s-office/board-and-committee-information> where you can find the different boards/committees, the vacancies and another link to apply on line. There is also the Riverwalk Ambassadors. Riverwalk Trust and the City are looking for energetic, outgoing and enthusiastic volunteers to serve as Riverwalk Ambassadors. An Ambassador will have the opportunity to welcome neighbors and visitors, answer questions, and hand out brochures from a Riverwalk Kiosk; provide information about restaurants, shops, events and activities in downtown and along the Riverwalk; enhance Riverwalk's identity as a vibrant, engaging, downtown Ft. Lauderdale destination; and earn community service hours for your school, nonprofit or philanthropic organization. Volunteer days are Saturday and Sunday from 11am-5pm (3-hour shifts). For more information: JoAnn Smith (club10@aol.com; 954-298-5607) or Jorg Hruschka, Chief Service Officer (jhruschka@fortlauderdale.gov; 954-828-5569).

OFFICE CONTACT: Robbi Uptegrove – 954-828-5033; email: ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov
In addition to hosting two pre-agenda meetings twice a month, I am also available to attend your HOA meetings to update your neighborhood on what is going on in the City as well as answer any questions/concerns you may have. Please contact Robbi to schedule.

EMAIL LIST: If you would like to be on our email list so that you receive information pertaining to the City – especially District 1 (i.e. news releases, meeting notices, events), please let Robbi know and she will add you.